

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7673

UNCLAS MOSCOW 2743

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: UR, US, OTRA

SUBJ: SOVIET HOTEL RESERVATION FEE

REF: STATE 044298

1. ON DECEMBER 4, 1970 UPDK (ADMINISTRATION FOR SERVICES TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS) NOTIFIED ALL EMBASSIES IN MOSCOW BY CIRCULAR NOTE THAT BY ORDER NO. 238 OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNAL ECONOMY DATED JUNE 13, 1969, "A RESERVATION FEE IS LEVIED ON PERSONS FOR WHOM RESERVATIONS ARE MADE ACCORDING TO THE APPLICABLE TARIFF FOR ONE DAY, IN ADDITION TO THE CHARGE FOR ACTUAL LODGING."

2. THE EMBASSY PROTESTED IMPOSITION OF THIS RESERVATION FEE TO THE U.S.A. SECTION OF THE MFA AND ON DECEMBER 29, 1970, RECEIVED A REPLY SIGNED BY DEPUTY DIRECTOR FEDOSEYEV SAYING THAT UPDK'S CIRCULAR NOTE OF DECEMBER 4 WAS "AN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT BY WHICH EMBASSY EMPLOYEES MUST BE GUIDED IN PAYING FOR THE RESERVATION OF HOTEL ROOMS."

3. ON DECEMBER 4, 1973, THE EMBASSY WROTE THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR, DOYEN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IN MOSCOW, ASKING HIM TO LODGE A PROTEST WITH MFA ON BEHALF OF THE ENTIRE DIPLOMATIC CORPS. THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR AGREED TO MAKE A DEMARCHE ON BEHALF OF THE CANADIAN EMBASSY "COUCHED IN SUCH TERMS AS TO IMPLY THAT I AM SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF THE CORPS AS A WHOLE." THIS PROTEST
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PRODUCED NO CHANGE IN THE SITUATION.

4. AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE "BRON" OR RESERVATION CHARGE IS SPORADICALLY ASSESSED, PRESUMABLY ON THE BASIS THAT THE HOTEL HAS SUFFERED A LOSS THROUGH HOLDING THE ROOM VACANT THE PRECEDING DAY IN ORDER TO ENSURE ITS AVAILABILITY FOR THE PERSON REQUESTING THE RESERVATION. THE TRAVELLER HAS NO WAY OF KNOWING IN ADVANCE WHETHER THE CHARGE WILL BE MADE AND HAS NO MEANS OF DETERMINING WHETHER THE HOTEL HAS IN FACT HELD THE ROOM VACANT FOR A DAY PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL.

5. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THE CHARGE IS NOT REGULARLY COLLECTED, THE EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE TO REQUEST A RAISE IN THE PER DIEM RATE FOR THE FIRST DAY OF STAY TO COVER THE "BRON" SINCE THIS WOULD PRODUCE A WINDFALL TO THE EMPLOYEE WHEN THE CHARGE IS NOT ASSESSED. ACCORDINGLY, THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN PROCESSING FOR PAYMENT THE ADDITIONAL AMOUNT OF THE "BRON" OR RESERVATION CHARGE WHEN A RECEIPT IS SUBMITTED FROM THE HOTEL SHOWING THIS CHARGE WAS MADE. THIS PRACTICE WAS REVIEWED BY THE INSPECTORS IN NOVEMBER 1974 WHO PERCEIVED NO OBJECTION.
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